

Special Studies and Evaluation

Office of Policy and Evaluation California Department of Education

Mathematics Implementation Study

The California Department of Education awarded a \$500,000 contract to WestEd, in partnership with the RAND Corporation and Management Analysis and Planning (MAP), to study the instructional practices used in teaching mathematics. The study will be completed by March 31, 2000.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the following three major evaluation questions (presented in order of emphasis):

- What classroom instructional practices and materials and what staff development are associated with higher mathematics achievement?
- To what extent are the instructional practices and characteristics that are identified in high performing classrooms prevalent throughout the state?
- What influence do state and local policies have on instructional practices?

The scope of the study is limited to mathematics classrooms in grades 4 and 8. However, the contractors will also conduct some initial exploratory work on mathematics instruction in grade 10. The findings of this study will serve as baseline data against which future changes in instructional practices and achievement can be measured.

Design of the Study

The study will involve four major data collection activities:

- Collection and analysis of 1998 SAT9 test scores for students enrolled in grades 3 and 7 and the analysis of SAT9 test scores for the same cohort of students in 1999.
- Administering a questionnaire relating to teaching practices in mathematics to a sample of grade 4 and grade 8 mathematics teachers.

- Classroom observations or interviews with a sample of teachers surveyed at each grade level to get a more complete picture of classroom practices.
- Interviews with selected principals and curriculum coordinators regarding the influence of state and local policies on instructional practices.

The focus of the data collection and analysis is to identify which instructional practices are associated with improving student scores.

Report of Findings

A final report of findings including implications for policy and practice will be prepared by March 31, 2000.

Contacts

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